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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2006

#### In Today's Papers

##### Bomb Kills 10 in Diyarbakir

A bomb blast killed 10 people, including six children, on Tuesday evening near a park in the mainly Kurdish city of Diyarbakir. The explosion was triggered by a mobile phone. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. The explosion came only one day after Turkey's main Kurdish political party DTP called on the PKK to declare a ceasefire unilaterally.

##### European Parliament Hosts PKK Conference

All papers report some PKK members held a press conference in the European Parliament under the auspices of EU lawmakers, issuing calls for the release of Abdullah Ocalan, the jailed leader of the PKK. EU Parliament member and ethnic Kurd Feleknaz Uca has called on the PKK to announce a ceasefire, and for talks between the sides for a settlement. A top PKK official in Europe Ahmet Gulabi Dere stressed the organization would not give up its armed struggle. Meanwhile, more than 200 Turkish and Kurdish intellectuals, former parliamentarians, and lawyers and doctors from the southeast issued yesterday the "strongest" call on the PKK to lay down arms unconditionally. Cumhuriyet predicts that the PKK, losing grassroots support, was preparing to accept a ceasefire call that had been made by Turkey's main Kurdish party DTP soon.

##### Ralston in Ankara for Talks on the PKK

All papers report the US Special Envoy for Countering the PKK, retired General Joseph Ralston, arrived in Ankara on Tuesday to hold talks today with the Prime Minister, Turkish General Staff (TGS,) intelligence officials, and his counterpart Edip Baser. Papers expect the Turks to tell Ralston that Turkey will not send additional troops to Afghanistan while the PKK threat continued in the country. Cumhuriyet says Ankara would ask Ralston to handover to Turkey the PKK terrorists sought by Interpol. Zaman reports that three-party meetings for fighting the PKK could be resumed after the visit of Ralston to Turkey. Several papers report the ruling AK Party government waited until the last minute to appoint retired

general Edip Baser as Ralston's counterpart. Cumhuriyet says the Turkish military had been uneasy with the idea of PKK coordinators, fearing such a mechanism could pave the way for holding talks with the terrorist organization. On Tuesday, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul told the press before traveling to attend an intercultural meeting in Paris that Washington had been expected to take more meaningful steps against the PKK. Zaman reports Gul as saying that even if backed by no one, Turkey would still do whatever necessary to beat the PKK problem.

Yalcin Dogan argued in the mass appeal Hurriyet that the appointment of PKK "coordinators" will lead to the "politicization of the PKK":

"The US appointed a coordinator for the PKK despite the fact that the Turkish military, the MFA and the President were all against such an appointment. This appointment unleashes the US short- and long-term intentions regarding the PKK issue. The concept of the coordinator implies someone who acts as mediator or a problem solver. Here the US wants to establish coordination with a terror organization. However, Retired General Edip Baser, who was named the coordinator for the Turkish side was quoted as objecting to this term and explained his mission as coordinator in the fight against terrorism. It is obvious that once we use the words 'PKK coordinator' to define this mission, it will end up with the politicization of the PKK. Americans had better not use the term 'PKK Coordinator.'"

Mehmet Ali Birand, optimistic about the appointment of the special envoys, suggests in the tabloid Posta that the PKK problem is "not something that can be solved solely through military means": "What will these two retired generals do? The special coordinators will talk about politics. The PKK problem is not something that can be solved solely through military means. I believe this development will lead to a new era. The US will be able to better understand

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Turkey's sensitivities as well as its ability to wage an antiterrorism campaign. Turkey, on the other hand, will see what the real intentions of the United States are and how much the two countries can cooperate. A solution depends on both Turkish and regional developments. There is a need for political, cultural, economic and social reforms. We looked at the matter from a solely security-related perspective at a time when even the military was warning that security measures alone cannot be the solution. Nothing has been done to find ways to win over the region's people. The media, the government and NGOs just stood silently by and did nothing. Even the tiniest of measures were seen as treason. We transformed our funerals into party rallies. We always blamed outside powers for what was happening. This dangerous escalation took us to the state of affairs we face today. There is only one way to escape this vicious circle. All state institutions must come together and prepare a joint long-term policy. If not, it will be harder to escape this trap."

Brits Express Support for Turkey in EU

Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal report British Prime Minister Blair said Turkey's exclusion from the EU would make "earthquake-like repercussions" across the world. British minister for European affairs, Geoffrey Hoon, said French Interior Minister Sarkozy's statement that Turkey should be kept out of the European bloc was one meant for domestic political consumption before the upcoming general elections in the country. Papers also cite the British Guardian as saying the West needed Turkey, but that European leaders broke Turkey's enthusiasm to join the bloc.

Scientific American to Give Turkey Supplement in January

Turkiye reports Ambassador Ross Wilson told an Istanbul gathering to celebrate a special Turkey supplement in the January 2007 issue of Scientific American that Turkey and the United States should act together to beat terrorism. Prime Minister Erdogan's advisor Egemen Bagis, the journal's editor Bruce Brandon, and Bilkent University Rector Ali Dogramaci were among the participants in the meeting held yesterday at the Ciragan Palace in Istanbul.

TV Highlights  
NTV (7 A.M.)

#### Domestic News

- Demonstrators laid a black wreath at the US Embassy in Ankara to protest the September 12, 1980 military takeover in Turkey.
- In a meeting with German Integration Minister Maria Bohmer, Prime Minister Erdogan denounced culture tests conducted in the country for Muslims who want to acquire German nationality.
- Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul is to visit Paris as the guest of President Jacques Chirac on September 12-14. Gul will take part in a conference on "Dialog between Peoples and Cultures" sponsored by the French Foreign Ministry.
- Turkey, for the first time, reported a budget surplus in the first eight months of the year.

#### International News

- Several terrorists tried to blow up a vehicle outside the US Embassy in Damascus on Tuesday morning; three attackers were killed in fighting with Embassy guards.
- Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni said the Palestinian government must fulfill the conditions set by the international community -- renouncing violence and recognizing Israel's right to exist.
- Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki met Iran's President Ahmadinejad in

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his first state visit to Iran. The two leaders issued messages for cooperation.

- Kurdish students burned an Iraqi flag during protests in front of the regional Kurdish Parliament in Erbil.
- Addressing the nation on the anniversary of 9/11, President Bush made it clear that he would not allow a nuclear-armed Iran.
- Many of the NATO countries have ignored an urgent NATO request for reinforcement in fighting a resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at

<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON